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Message Text

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11
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

SAJ-01 ACDA-05 /075 W
---------- 063631
R 301031Z OCT 75
FM USMISSION USBERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1598
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I AL SECTION 1 OF 2 USBERLIN 2179

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PBOR, WB, GE
SUBJECT: BOUNDARY RESCUE AGREEMENT

REF: USBERLIN 1927

1. SUMMARY: AFTER TWO AND HALF YEARS OF NEGOTIATIONS, SENAT AND GDR EXCHANGED LETTERS ON OCTOBER 29 ON SUBJECT OF BOUNDARY RESCUE. AS RESULT THIS AGREEMENT, WEST BERLIN POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENT WILL BE ABLE TO RESCUE WEST BERLINERS WHO FALL INTO WATERS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST BERLIN WITHOUT FEAR OF BEING SHOT BY GDR GUARD. AGREEMENT HAD APPROVAL OF THREE ALLIES. END SUMMARY.

2. INABILITY OF WEST BERLIN POLICE AND FIREMEN TO RESCUE WEST BERLINERS WHO FALL INTO SPREE RIVER AND OTHER WATERS THAT DIVIDE EAST AND WEST BERLIN HAS BEEN OURCE OF CONCERN TO ALLIES, WEST BERLIN AUTHORITIES AND GENERAL PUBLIC ALIKE. NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN SENAT AND EAST GERMAN AUTHORITIES BEGAN ALMOST THIRTY MONTHS AGO ON
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MEANS OF EFFECTING SUCH RESCUES WITHOUT DRAWING FIRE OF

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EAST GERMAN POLICE. PRINCIPAL AREA INVOLVED IS PORTION OF SPREE RIVER ON EITHER SIDE OF OBERBAUM BRIDGE WHERE ACTUAL SECTOR-SECTOR BOUNDARY IS ON WEST BERLIN SIDE AT WATER'S EDGE, ALTHOUGH WALL IS CONSTRUCTED ON EAST BERLIN SIDE OF RIVER. IN PAST YEARS, SEVERAL CHILDREN HAVE DROWNED IN SPREE AT THAT POINT, MOST RECENT CASE OCCURING LAST MAY WHEN TURKISH YOUNGSTER PERISHED. IN THAT CASE, EAST GERMAN POLICE REFUSED TO LET WEST BERLIN FIREMEN RETRIEVE BOY'S BODY.

3. DROWNINGS PUT PRESSURE ON EAST GERMANS AS WELL AS SENAT TO REACH AGREEMENT. REMAINING ISSUES (REFTEL) WERE OVERCOME AS RESULT OF COMPROMISE LANGUAGE IN GDR AND SENAT LETTERS WHICH PLACED AGREEMENT FIRMLY UNDER QA UMBRELLA. ON OCT 28, ALLIES ISSUED BK/L(75)37 WHICH NOTED THAT SENAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH BK/L(73)46, HAD REQUESTED AUTHORIZATION TO SEEK ASSURANCES FROM GDR THAT EMERGENCY LIFE SAVING MEASURES UNDERTAKEN FROM WEST BERLIN WOULD NOT BE OPPOSED IN CASES OF ACCIDENTS IN SECTOR-SECTOR BOUNDARY WATERS. THE BK/L ALSO NOTED THAT SENAT HAD SENT ALLIES ON OCT 13 DRAFT LETTER AND ANNEX ADDRESSED TO SENAT BY GDR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICIAL (MITDANK) ALONG WITH SENAT'S PROPOSED REPLY. BK/L(75)37 STATED THAT ALLIES HAD NO OBJECTION TO SENAT ACKNOWLEDGING RECEIPT OF GDR'S LETTER AND TAKING NOTE OF ITS CONTENTS IN SENAT REPLY. BK/L ALSO STATED THAT EXCHANGE OF LETTERS COULD NOT PREJUDICE QA NOR GENERALLY AFFECT STATUS OF BERLIN, IN PARTICULAR NATURE OF BOUNDARY BETWEEN WESTERN AND EASTERN SECTORS OF CITY AND LEGAL STATUS OF WATERWAYS IN BERLIN.

4. ISSUANCE OF BK/L(75)37 CLEARED WAY FOR EXCHANGE OF LETTERS BETWEEN SENAT REPRESENTATIVE (SENATSRAT ANNUSSEK OF INTERIOR DEPARTMENT) AND GDR FONMIN OFFICIAL MITDANK AT 3:30 P.M. ON OCT 29. SENAT PRESS SPOKESMAN AND CHAIRMAN ALLIED (BRITISH) PRESS OFFICER ISSUED FOLLOWING STATEMENT AFTER LETTERS HAD BEEN EXCHANGED:

BEGIN TEXT: ON SIGNING THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT OF 3 SEPTEMBER 1971 FOUR YEARS AGO, THE FOUR GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED DECLARED THAT THEY WOULD MAKE IT THEIR TASK TO PROMOTE THE ELIMINATION OF TENSION AND THE PREVENTION CONFIDENTIAL

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OF COMPLICATIONS IN THE RELEVANT AREA. THEY THEREFORE INSTRUCTED THE GERMAN AUTHORITIES CONCERNED TO MAKE DETAILED ARRANGEMENTS, IN ORDER TO BRING ABOUT SOME PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT FOR BERLINERS BETWEEN THE WESTERN SECTORS OF BERLIN AND THE AREAS BORDERING ON THESE SECTORS.

IT IS IN THIS SPRIRIT THAT THE SENAT HAD EXPRESSED THE WISH, MORE THAN TWO YEARS AGO, THAT THE AUTHORITIES

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CONCERNED IN THE SOVIET SECTOR OF BERLIN WOULD NOT SEEK
TO OPPOSE EMERGENCY MEASURES, WHICH RESCUERS MIGHT BE
LED TO UNDERTAKE FROM THE WESTERN SECTORS
OF THE CITY, EACH TIME THE LATTER COULD INTERVENE
USEFULLY IN ORDER TO SAVE HUMAN LIFE, BEFORE RESCUERS
FROM THE EASTERN HALF OF THE CITY COULD ACT.

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IT WAS ALSO IN THIS SPRIRIT THAT THE ALLIED
KOMMANDATURA HAS AUTHORIZED THE SENAT TO ACCEPT AND, IF
NEED BE, TO TAKE NOTE OF, ANY COMMITMENT WHICH MIGHT
ASSURE THE SECURITY OF THE RESCUERS AND FACILITATE
THEIR TASK. HAVING BECOME CERTAIN THAT FROM THEIR SIDE,
THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES WOULD NOT SEEK TO OPPOSE PRACTICAL
MEASURES OF THIS SORT, THE KOMMANDATURA AND THE SENAT
ENTERTAIN THE HOPE THAT IN THE FUTURE RESCUERS FROM ALL
SIDES WILL BE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE TOGETHER TO WHAT
IS THEIR NATURAL HUMANITARIAN MISSION. END TEST.

5. SENAT SOUGHT ALLIED APPROVAL TO ALSO RELEASE TEXTS
OF GDR AND SENAT LETTERS WITH FOREGOING STATEMENT SINCE
GDR LIKELY TO ISSUE EDITED VERSIONS. (IN FACT, THEY ISSUED FULL

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TEST OF EXCHANGE.) WE AND BRITISHAGREED BUT FRENCH DID NOT SO LETTERS
WERE NOT RELEASED BY ALLIES. HOWEVER, INSTRUCTIONS ARE BEING
ISSUED TO POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENT FOR PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION
OF AGREEMENT. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR HAS PREPARED
FACTUAL PUBLIC INFORMATION LEAFLET ON RESCUE MEASURES
AT BOUNDARY WATERS SINCE FREQUENTLY FIRST PERSON ON
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SCENE IS PRIVATE WEST BERLIN CITIZEN.

6. SENAT OFFICIALS WERE SOMEWHAT UPSET AT REFUSAL
OF ALLIES APPROVAL TO RELEASE TEXTS OF LETTERS BUT
ACCEPTED DECISION. SENAT PRESS SPOKESMAN HAS DEALT
WITH SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS FROM HOURNALISTS BY
REFERRING BACK TO TEXT OF JOINT STATEMENT QUOTED
ABOVE. ALLIED CHAIRMAN PRESS OFFICER IS TAKING SAME
LINE.

7. ALL MAJOR NEWSPAPERS OCT 30 FEATURED RESCUE AGREE-
MENT. NEUES DEUTSCHLAND AND TAGESSPIEGEL CARRIED
ADN-RELEASED TEXTS OF SENAT AND GDR LETTERS.
TAGESSPIEGEL ALSO NOTED IN ITS FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE
THAT "INFORMED CIRCLES ASSUMED THAT ALLIED RESERVA-
TIONS WERE RESPONSIBLE" FOR SENAT FAILURE TO PUBLISH
LETTERS. IN GENERAL, HOWEVER, MEDIA TREATMENT OF
AGREEMENT WAS POSITIVE ALTHOUGH MOST NEWSPAPERS NOTED
THAT TERMS WERE HARDLY SURPRISING. MORGENPOST
OBSERVED IN EDITORIAL THAT IT WAS UNDERSTANDABLE
THAT AGREEMENT PRECLUDED HELP TO REFUGEES AND ADDED
THAT ON BALANCE TERMS OF AGREEMENT WERE ALL THAT ONE
COULD EXPECT. SPANDAUER VOLKSBLATT EDITORIAL
CRITICIZED COMPLICATED RESCUE PROCEDURES (ALARM
MUST BE SET OFF BEFORE RESCUERS MAY ENTER WATER)
AND ADDED THAT AGREEMENT ACCOMPLISHED VERY LITTLE.
CDU BERLIN LEADER LUMMER, WHILE WELCOMING AGREEMENT,
NOTED THAT NEED FOR SUCH COMPLEX ARRANGEMENT TO COVER
NATURAL HUMANITARIAN ACTION HIGHLIGHTED PROBLEM OF
BERLIN'S SITUATION. NEUES DEUTSCHLAND EDITORIAL CITED
AGREEMENT AS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF GDR EFFORTS TO
NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH WEST BERLIN.
GEORGE

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